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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, and 20-33 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicants AMEND claims 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15 16, 18 and 20-22 and CANCEL 1, 11, and 13 and ADD claims 23-33.

The Examiner has indicated that the outstanding Office Action is a Final Office Action (paragraph no. 7 of the outstanding Office Action). The Examiner is reminded that “[b]efore [a] final rejection is in order[,] a **clear issue** should be developed between the examiner and applicant.” MPEP § 706.07 (emphasis added).

In the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12 of previous Amendment, dated January 29, 2004, Applicants requested that the Examiner provide an English language translation of Matsumoto et al. and Yasuda et al. “so that the record is clear as to the precise facts the examiner is relying upon” (emphasis added). The Examiner has failed to provide an English language translation of Matsumoto et al. and Yasuda et al. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Examiner has failed to develop a clear issue by not providing an English language translation of Matsumoto et al. and Yasuda et al.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Finality of the outstanding Office Action.

The Examiner objected to claims 15, 22, and 16 for allegedly containing minor informalities.

With respect to claims 15 and 22, Applicants have amended claim 15 to correct the minor informality noted by the Examiner.

With respect to claim 16, Applicants have amended claim 16 to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Applicants did not intend and do not intend to claim a Markush group. Claim 16, as currently amended, clearly and specifically recites that the plurality of thin compact bodies have one of a ring shape, an E-shape, a U-shape, an I-shape, a rectangular shape including a central dividing member, and a square shape. Thus, Applicants have not amended claim 16 to recite a Markush group.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of

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the objection to claims 15, 16, and 22.

Claims 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for allegedly containing subject matter that was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skill in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time of the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that Figs. 4 and 9 of the originally filed Specification and the accompanying description of Fig. 4 on page 6 and 7 and of Fig. 9 on page 8 of the originally filed Specification clearly disclose that the joints are exposed after the bars are attached. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the originally filed Specification clearly describes the feature of "at least one joint between adjacent thin compact bodies is exposed after the bars are attached to the thin compact bodies" as recited in Applicants' claims 21 and 22, as amended herein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 21 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claims 1, 2, 8, 10-13, 16, 18, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Matsumoto et al (JP 3-005377) and Yasuda et al. (JP 4-367569). Claims 5 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Matsumoto et al. and Yasuda et al., and further in view of Shirahata et al. (U.S. 6,005,468). Applicants have canceled claims 1, 11, and 13. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, and 20.

Claim 5 has been amended to recite:

"A method of firing magnetic cores comprising the steps of:
providing a plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies made of a magnetic material and having flattened through holes;
arranging each of the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies so that axes of the through holes are arranged horizontally;
attaching a powder made of an organic material to an outer surface of the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies;
attaching the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies to on

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another so that the axes of the flattened through-holes are vertically arranged;

firing the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies while the powder is interposed between the adjacent flattened-ring compact bodies such that said powder is vaporized during the firing step; and

separating said plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies from each other; wherein

a bar is attached only to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies." (emphasis added)

Claim 23 recites:

"A method of firing magnetic cores comprising the steps of: providing a plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies made of a magnetic material and having flattened through holes;

arranging each of the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies so that axes of the through holes are arranged horizontally;

attaching a powder made of an organic material to an outer surface of the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies;

attaching the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies to one another so that the axes of the flattened through-holes are vertically arranged;

firing the plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies while the powder is interposed between the adjacent flattened-ring compact bodies such that said powder is vaporized during the firing step; and

separating said plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies from each other; wherein

a bar is attached to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies such that joints between adjacent thin compact bodies are not covered by the bar." (emphasis added)

Applicants' claim 5 recites the feature of "a bar is attached only to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies." Applicants' claim 23 recites the feature of "a bar is attached to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies such that joints between adjacent thin compact bodies are not covered by the bar." Applicants' claims 15 and 28 recite features which are similar to features recited in Applicants' claims 5 and 23, respectively, including the above emphasized features. With the improved features of claims 5, 15, 23, and 28,

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Applicants have been able to provide a method of firing magnetic cores in which firing is performed with a high degree of reliability and mass production is enabled (see, for example, the first full paragraph on page 3 of the originally filed Specification).

Applicants have amended claims 5 and 15 to recite the feature of "a bar is attached only to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies."

Applicants respectfully submit that Figs. 4 and 9 of the originally filed Specification and the accompanying description of Fig. 4 on page 6 and 7 and of Fig. 9 on page 8 of the originally filed Specification clearly provide support for the features recited in claims 5, 15, 23 and 28.

The Examiner has admitted in paragraph no. 8 on page 6 of the outstanding Office Action that none of AAPA, Matsumoto et al., and Yasuda et al. teaches or suggests the use of a bar. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that none of AAPA, Matsumoto et al., and Yasuda et al. teaches or suggests the feature of "a bar is attached only to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies" as recited in Applicants' claims 5 and 15.

The Examiner has relied upon Shirahata et al. to allegedly teach this feature. However, Shirahata et al. teaches in **Fig. 16(a)** that bar **64** is attached to a pair of sides **and** is attached to the inner surface **2h** of the cores by folded portions **64h**, NOT that the bar is attached **only** to each of a pair of sides as recited in Applicants' claims 5 and 15. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Shirahata et al. fails to teach or suggest the feature of "a bar is attached only to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies" as recited in Applicants' claims 5 and 15.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant Admitted Prior Art in view of Matsumoto et al. and Yasuda et al., and further in view of Shirahata et al.

Applicants added claims 23 and 28, which recite the feature of "a bar is attached

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to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies such that joints between adjacent thin compact bodies are not covered by the bar." As noted above, the Examiner has admitted in paragraph no. 8 on page 6 of the outstanding Office Action that none of AAPA, Matsumoto et al., and Yasuda et al. teaches or suggests the use of a bar. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that none of AAPA, Matsumoto et al., and Yasuda et al. teaches or suggests the feature of "a bar is attached to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies such that joints between adjacent thin compact bodies are not covered by the bar" as recited in Applicants' claims 23 and 28.

Further, Shirahata et al. teaches in Fig. 16(a) that bar 64 is attached to a pair of sides such that the joints are covered by the bar 64, NOT such that the joints are not covered by the bar as recited in Applicants' claims 23 and 28. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Shirahata et al. fails to teach or suggest the feature of "a bar is attached to each of a pair of sides of the stacked plurality of flattened-ring compact bodies such that joints between adjacent thin compact bodies are not covered by the bar" as recited in Applicants' claims 23 and 28.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that AAPA, Matsumoto et al., Yasuda et al., and Shirahata et al., applied alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the unique combination and arrangement of elements recited in claims 5, 15, 23, and 28 of the present application. Claims 2, 8, 10 and 21 depend upon claim 5 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 5 is allowable. Claims 12, 16, 18, 20 and 22 depend upon claim 15 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 15 is allowable. Claims 24-27 depend upon claim 23 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 23 is allowable. Claims 29-33 depend upon claim 28 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claim 28 is allowable.

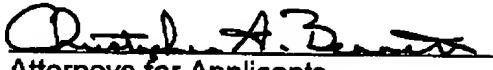
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

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The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attnorneys for Applicants

Joseph R. Keating
Registration No. 37,368

Christopher A. Bennett
Registration No. 46,710

KEATING & BENNETT LLP
10400 Eaton Place, Suite 312
Fairfax, VA 22030
Telephone: (703) 385-5200
Facsimile: (703) 385-5080